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The Creative Woman



Susan Griffin

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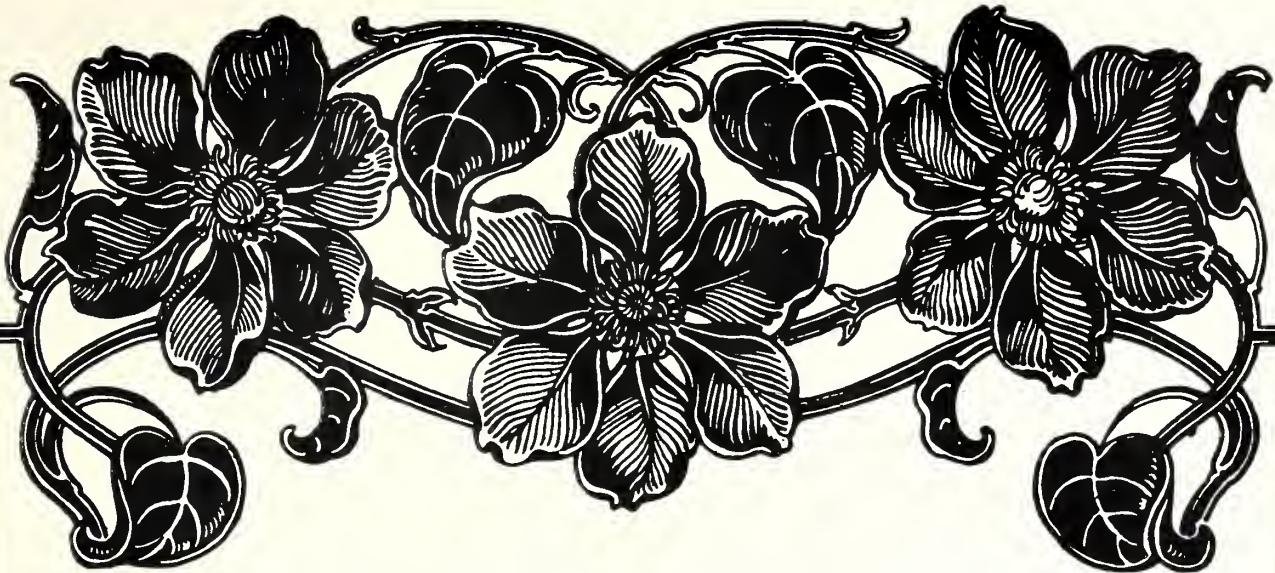
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The Creative Woman is published three times a year by Governors State University. We focus on a special topic in each issue, presented from a feminist perspective. We celebrate the creative achievements of women in many fields and appeal to inquiring minds. We publish fiction, poetry, book reviews, articles, photography and original graphics.

Cover photo of Susan Griffin by Raisa Fastman



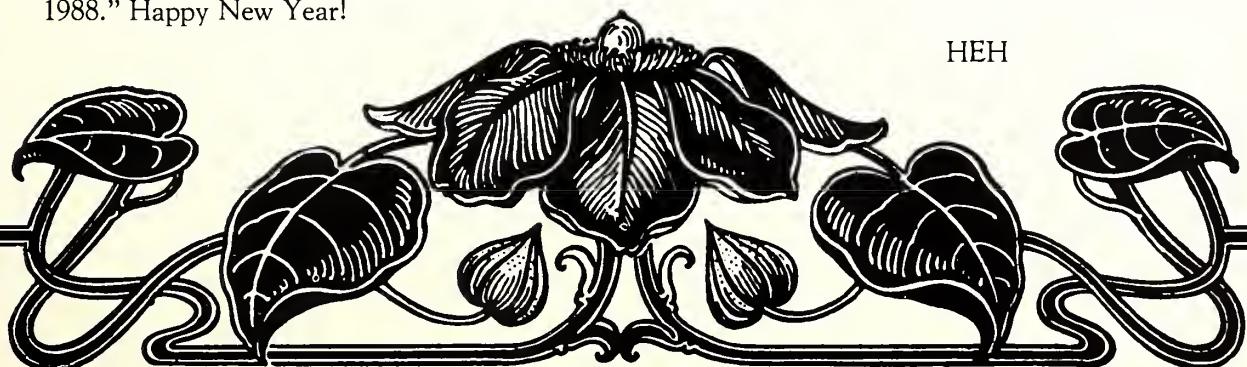
It has been the position of this publication that creativity takes many forms. Not only product, but process may be new. Not only cultural artifacts but novel modes of organization or building human relations may be original. In this issue we look at the creative responses of a variety of women to the mess this old world is in as we begin 1988. The persistence of violence and war; hatred and prejudice; hypocrisy, lies and corruption in high places—the apparent breakdown of social norms, the lack of a society based on shared beliefs—these are all painfully obvious. Looking deeper, we see remarkable resilience and insight that give us hope:

We proudly present our lead article by Susan Griffin, poet, writer, lecturer, and one of the most influential feminist theorists at work today. In "Split Culture" Griffin explains with profound conviction how these human evils stem from self-hatred caused by our separation from nature. Constance Talbot, living as a street person, shows how one woman managed to cope with the degradation of homelessness; speaking to herself she writes, "...it is not you who are limited so much as the distorted perceptions of society." In Rebecca Pitts' great poem, "World Sacrifice," we recognize the poet's courageous and moving response to evil and death. Susan Bettis explices this poem in the context of Pitts' volume of poems, *Brief Authority*. The intricacies of Mary Cassatt's tender images make their own statements; Elizabeth Lindsay has shown how her work was influenced by Japanese printmakers.

In Hanselman's short story, one harried housewife takes the option first made possible by Ibsen when Nora slammed the door. An old friend, Walter Feldman, advocates reforms in the judicial system to remove sexual bias in the courts. This issue features some new poets worth attention, personal views of the Creativity Weekend we co-sponsored last Fall, and contains the index to volumes 7 and 8.

There is much in this issue to trouble our hearts but we trust that our readers will find here cause for hope and inspiration. As Elmer Witt puts it, "May you enjoy the pains and blessings of 1988." Happy New Year!

HEH



SPLIT CULTURE

Susan Griffin

The atom bomb, in many ways, is a perfect metaphor, not only, of course, for the physical situation we're facing now, but also for the psychological situation. If you look at the process of the atom bomb, what goes on in creating that explosion is a splitting, a separating of energy and matter. Part of what I am talking about today is a basic split in this culture between spirit and matter which roughly plays itself out socially along the lines of women and peoples of colour and, (in the Western European imagination), Jewish people, represent matter, the material, and the white male represents spirit and culture.

The first atom bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima had painted on it a nude pin-up of Rita Hayworth. And of course, in addition, the first population, the only population, that has been victimized by nuclear weapons to this date was a population looked upon as "the other" by the mind and in the mythos of western civilization, because the Japanese are peoples of color.

What I am going to speak about today, is my perception of the way that the enemy is perceived.

At base, the hatred of the enemy, whether is be in the form of pornography, sexism, racism or antisemitism, is fundamentally, in its genesis, a form of self-hatred.

A number of years ago, I wrote a book called *Woman and Nature* and in it I discovered the habit of this mind, the civilized mind, to associate woman with nature and matter, and man with culture and spirit. Therefore, our notion of the human is one that is separated from and above nature, and woman is inferior insofar as she is closer to nature. Two things happen from this separation. One is that we are alienated from this world. We exist within nature, but we have a relationship of distrust with nature.

In relation to nature, the southern slave-master, who, once he had created a slave class, and had believed his own description of who and what a slave is, then had to live with his terror of the people he had enslaved and his own imagination of who they were. And, in a sense, we all of us live with this terror in relation to nature.

When we place ourselves above and different from nature, outside of nature, we also become alienated from ourselves and in a very dangerous and serious way, we cease to know ourselves, because as we separate ourselves from nature, we



must then also separate the natural self from our idea of who we are because we *are* nature. We breathe, we are born, we die, we eat, we get cold, we are part of the biosphere. It is the natural self who feels sensations, who feels deep feelings, who can be overwhelmed by feeling, can suddenly weep or laugh or feel anger, the natural self who is very aware of mortality, who remembers infancy, who remembers being a child, remembers a very deep kind of dependency on the earth and on the female body.

The next book that I wrote after *Woman and Nature* was a book on pornography. And when I began it I felt that I was simply going to articulate the feminist position about pornography which is that pornography is not erotic and that is a form which is used to express the degradation of women and is used to reduce women to sexual objects. But as I was reading pornography, I began to see that the same theme exists there that I found in Western philosophy and in the development of Western science—the same relationship to nature and the same idea of woman as a symbol of nature, a hidden idea, but very much there. In pornography, woman functions in the same way as she does in the rest of Western mythos as a symbol of the natural and more important as a symbol of the denied natural self.

James Baldwin said in *The Fire Next Time*, that "The nigger" had nothing to do with black people, that the creation of "the nigger" was something which came from the white mind and that the

whole portrait, the whole idea of “the nigger” was a description of a part of the white mind. This is also true of the heroine in pornography. She is in no way like a real woman. That is the first thing you realize when you are a woman and you read pornography. Approaching pornography, if you have not read it, you expect perhaps you will find an erotic experience there, or perhaps some new sexual feeling. But when a woman reads a pornographic book, she finds no one to identify with: there's no way to enter into the experience as herself, because the women there are so unreal.

One of the chief sort of allegorical figures in pornography is the virgin and I want to talk to you about the pornographic virgin, because she makes it very clear that the woman in pornography is really not a woman but that she is a female impersonator.

In pornography, the virgin is Snow White, pun significant. She is Snow White. She is without any thought of sex. She's just never had the faintest sexual feeling in herself. She doesn't have any hidden desires. She's pure. Well, when you think about this, this is really not part of female experience. None of us... I've never spoken to a woman who really claims that there was, at any time, a period in her life when she was really free of any impure thoughts. And as you read pornography you begin to realize that this pure virgin is not a woman, but she represents a hidden wish of the pornographer's. And that what he's really desiring is that he would have moments in which he did not have any sexual thoughts, because sexual thoughts are profoundly disturbing to him. They're very problematic to him.

I discovered, in fact, in my work on pornography, that the reason sexual thoughts are so profoundly disturbing to the pornographer and to this culture, is that in the sexual experience one is taken back to a profoundly physical state in which one can no longer deny that one is very deeply part of nature and is therefore a dependent, mortal person. And that moreover the sexual experience takes one precisely back to those feelings that one had as an infant, even if they're not consciously remembered. The feelings themselves are remembered, being close to that maternal body, that body which had such power over one: to feed or not to feed, to care for, to pick up or not to pick up, to leave us wet and crying in the crib. And that our first notions of what death were occurred there in that infantile state, because, you know, we associate death with abandonment, with being cold, with being terribly lonely. We have no idea really what death is but when the imagery of death comes up, it matches in every way the infantile experience of not being

cared for during certain moments.

If the primary delusion, we have come to believe, in this society, is that we are above nature—and that therefore we can place ourselves above the natural experiences of loss and eventual death and vulnerability to change and dependency on the biosphere and, in our infancy, on a woman's body—the sexual experience has to break through this delusion, because it brings us back to that memory of the infant's experience of closeness with our mother's body and of dependency on another creature.

It was doing my work on pornography that made me understand why woman is made into the symbol of nature, because the infant's first experience of nature is through a woman's body. And she represents natural power for the child for a number of years. She is the one who can feed or not feed, who holds life and death in her hands.

Well, getting back to the pornographic virgin. There are a couple of giveaways in the classic story of the pornographic virgin, that make you realize that she is really not who she seems to be, that she really is a female impersonator. There's a very classic plot in pornography which occurs over and over again, *The Man with the Maid*, which is a Victorian classic, the Marquis de Sade's *Justine* has this plot, *Behind the Green Door* has this plot. That is, a young woman, virgin, pure, is kidnapped by a hero and he takes her to his castle, or to his condominium, and she is taken off to a padded sort of room and he proceeds to humiliate her, take her clothes off and rape her. Now, the first giveaway is that she really loves being raped. This is not the experience that women have, when they are raped. But it is an experience which is consistently projected on women, not only in pornography, but in the culture in general. It took the feminist movement a number of years to break down that myth that women really want to be raped and that that is why rape occurs.

The second giveaway is that after he rapes her and then she likes it because she has all these orgasms and she's having such fun, he doesn't say to her, “Oh, gee, I'm so glad you liked it and, you know, you were so cold to me you forced me into kidnapping you, and what a drag and now we can really get it on, you know, we can really be lovers.” Nor—if he's the type who doesn't like to get involved—does he say, “Well, look, you know, we have a good thing here, why don't you come over once a week to my castle, maybe Tuesday nights, and sleep over, you know.” He says to her, “You slut, you wanted it all along, didn't you.” And he says this, because he is absolutely right. She is his projected desire to

remain pure. He's angry at himself. He has split his natural self off from himself. Therefore, he has lost his eros. He's lost his connection to the universe. He's lost his capacity to love. He's lost his sensuality. He's furious at her for holding out, for holding back on him. He's furious at this part of himself for leaving. And it's true he did want it all along. He wanted that part of himself back. But, at the same time, he's enraged with her, because she does come back. She's a slut for coming back. Because when she comes back, she brings that other knowledge back, the knowledge of nature and the knowledge that he does not have power over nature, because indeed he's simply a part of nature; he is vulnerable and mortal.



You see the same kind of split, love-hate relationship in really every imaginary enemy relationship that I've studied. It's particularly clear in the racist imagination or the anti-semitic's imagination. We're all very familiar with American racism towards black people, because this country's history is so inextricably woven with that history of racism.

I discovered that, in fact, pornography accompanies racism and racism accompanies pornography. Where you find one you will find the other.

In *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, Jacobo Timmerman describes what it was like to be imprisoned in Argentina, both because he was a Jew and also because he was a journalist who was speaking out about the repression and censorship in Argentina. One of the things he describes, continually through his book, is the connection between a certain kind of violent, enemy-creating thought and pornography. He calls this the erotism of violence. He speaks of

Eduardo Galliano, who is an Uruguayan writer of the left. Timmerman wrote against both leftist violence and right wing violence—and he quotes a sentence from Galliano's book, saying "the first time in violence is like the first time in love." He also describes a right wing book, called *The Seven Madmen*, by Roberto Arldt. In the plot of this book a terrorist revolutionary group plots to take over the government and this group is financed by profits from a chain of brothels. This imaginary association between prostitution and a kind of basically totalitarian mentality is one which he also discovered when he was imprisoned in Argentina. He found that the torturers and the officers were entitled to control over prostitution in certain bars and that "three very beautiful girls are inmates at Coti Martinez and service the guards' sexual whims." And, of course, we know that one way for women to survive within the Nazi concentration camps was to act as prostitutes. And finally he describes the pornography of torture within the prison. Here, in a sense, men became the objects of pornography in the torture within the prison.

For example, the guards order the prisoner to run naked along the passageway which is fifty meters from one end to the other, and force him to recite aloud sentences such as "My mother's a whore," "The whore who gave birth to me." "I masturbate." "I must respect the corporal or guard." "The police love me." Here again is a love-hate relationship in which eros is turned into a kind of aggression.

I want to tell you a story from the holocaust. I'm actually going to read it from an article, which I wrote, called, "The Way of All Ideology: The Need for An Enemy," about Hitler's anti-semitism, because it illustrates so perfectly what I'm saying about the denied self existing in the other.

"Every time I deny myself I commit a kind of suicide. And it is, in this light, interesting to know that Hitler, the prototype of the fascist man, committed suicide. For his hatred and fear of 'the Jew'—and then the Slavs, and black people, the gay, the disabled—was ultimately a denied self-hatred. Of this one story comes to mind. When he wrote *Mein Kampf* Hitler recorded that he became an anti-Semitic one day when he saw an old man dressed in a caftan walking through Vienna. 'Is this a Jew?' he asked, and then said to himself, 'Is this a German?' deciding forever that this Jew could not have been a German and was eternally separate and different from himself."

When you project a denied identity onto another, it is essential that you define that other as different. Otherwise the projection does no

good. If I'm going to project and then say, "oh, that person is just like me," then I have to own what I am projecting back again. So, it was essential, at the moment in which Hitler decided his career in life was to be an anti-Semite that he define the Jew as not German, that he, Hitler, is a German and this person over here is a Jew and not like himself. When he would speak about this man in the caftan—this man in a caftan became symbolic to him of his hatred for the Jewish people—he would work himself up into a paroxysm of hatred even to the point that once when he was speaking he went backstage and vomited.

After I had read about this passage in *Mein Kampf* which he brought up often in his orations, I learned that when he was a young art student, Hitler bought his clothes from a Jewish man who sold secondhand apparel. And the piece of clothing he wore most often was, guess what . . . a caftan. He wore this caftan so often that people identified him with it: "There's Hitler in his caftan." Moreover, what Hitler did not know is that the Jewish caftan is really German dress from the Middle Ages preserved by the Jewish people who were exiled from Germany, at that time, and brought back into Germany when they could return. So that what was Hitler's personal story was also actually the story of the German people's relationship to the Jew and of Western civilization's relationship to "the other."

The hatred of the other is a kind of suicide.

The frenzy of the hatred of this enemy is such that the pornographer, or the racist or the anti-Semite is willing actually to sacrifice his own life in order to murder the other. In the progress of the war between Germany and Russia, when the German troops were on the Russian front and when the passage of troops and supplies to the Russian front was absolutely crucial to the military situation, rather than send these troop trains filled with troops and supplies to the Russian front to fight in that crucial battle, these trains were deployed, taken away from military effort and filled with Jews to send them to their death at Auschwitz.

The one who needs an enemy needs it so desperately that he is willing to sacrifice his own material existence in this battle against the enemy.

The structure of mind which creates an enemy really can work with any ideological system. The system of ideology which produces an enemy robs us, not only of our relationship to nature and our natural self, our sense of deepest feeling and connection with the universe, but it also takes from us a whole range of imaginative possibility. Because when we are so alienated from ourselves we lose a great deal of self-

knowledge and, it finally is, I believe, from deep self-knowledge, first and foremost, that human creativity springs.

Nadezhda Mandelstam writing about persecution under the Stalinist regime noticed that the Soviet bureaucracy had a particular difficulty with poetry, that the poetic imagination was particularly frightening to the totalitarian mind. And I realized also, in studying the history of the holocaust, that, in fact, it was at that period of enormous creativity that the right wing rose up in Germany and that anti-Semitism became such a powerful force. And that it was a period of profound creativity most particularly on the part of European Jews. It was a virtual flowering. You have only to list a few names: Einstein, Schonberg, Mahler. The list of names can go on and on of Jewish people who, at the time, were enormously creative and in virtually every field. So this kind of ideological construct not only destroys creativity, but is actually terribly afraid of it. And thus ideology works itself into a kind of box because it cuts off possibilities in its own mind.

We find the same kind of thought in relation to nuclear warfare now in the Reagan administration. In Robert Scheer's book which he has written about Reagan's thinking about nuclear warfare, he quotes a man, T.K. Jones, "whose idea of civil defense is crucial to Reagan's defense policy." And T.K. Jones' idea of how we can survive atomic warfare is this, "If there are enough shovels to go around, everyone's going to make it."

In a system in which you have replaced reality and the force of nature with a system of ideas which you believe gives you some magical power over nature, when reality intervenes, when the truth comes in and says to you "this delusionary system is not truthful," this truth is seen as terrifically threatening. In that system of mind, in that structure of mind, anybody who reveals the untruth of the idea is mortally dangerous. The ideology has not become a way to really explain and understand nature, but has become a way of mastery over nature, a way to prove that, in fact, your mere thoughts can make you immortal and can place you above the natural process.

Therefore, if those thoughts are disproved as untrue, by reality, you are actually brought face-to-face with the fact of your own mortality. And the more that the truth of our position on the earth as natural mortal beings is denied, the more the terror of death and mortality grows. Anybody who is going to break through that delusionary system is actually perceived, in a psychological way, by the person who believes in the delusionary system as mortally threatening. And therefore it is interesting that the Reagan

Administration portrays anybody who has a fear of nuclear war as serving the “designs of the Kremlin”. I’m quoting Rostov.

The projection of a denied self onto an enemy never works. And, in fact, not only does it not work, but the enemy is perceived as someone who gets stronger and stronger and stronger, because with every effort to imaginatively diminish and reduce this enemy, the enemy still returns. So, therefore, the enemy must be like that mythic creature, when you cut one head off nine other heads grow.



It is exactly this kind of distortion that Hitler made of his enemy, the Jew. He actually believed that the Jews had tremendous power over the German nation. And his idea of this power actually grew as the actual power of the Jew within society diminished. After the laws which stripped Jewish citizens of Germany of any right which would make a Jewish person able to hold any reasonable power within society, that was when Hitler’s ideas about Jewish power got even more hysterical. Because you see, if you imaginably strip your enemy of power and your enemy really represents the denied part of yourself, and then you’re still breathing, you still suddenly have a sexual feeling, you have a feeling of loss or of love for somebody or a feeling of hunger or thirst.

So, this Jew or this Soviet system with its missiles or this woman over there must be incredibly powerful, because look what you’ve done to her. You’ve taken away every civil right this person has and yet they still have this power to make you feel mortal.

The attacks on the enemy, both in the imagination and in reality, have to increase. And there is a final solution in mind. It’s a final solution which exists in the mind of pornography and, unfortunately, it’s a final sountion which, I believe, exists in the mind of this civilization.

The final solution which ideological culture has for the extermination of the enemy is to destroy the enemy and to replace the enemy with a document showing the destruction of that enemy.

It’s interesting that one of the times Robert Scheer interviewed T.K. Jones (who believes that we can defend ourselves against a nuclear blast with a shovel), he interviewed him in an office which apparently is filled with photographs of Hiroshima immediately after the nuclear blast. And during this period in which I was doing this research, I happened to spend half a day riding across the countryside with a woman who is part of the American Indian movement, and she told me that the best records of the Indian massacres were kept by the American army.

Well, even the final solution doesn’t work. What must happen is, because the final solution doesn’t work, and, of course, we know it can’t because the enemy is not out there, but the enemy is in here, the concept of who the enemy is must be expanded. For instance, Hitler had a whole list. After he was going to finish the Jews, then he was going to exterminate the Polish people, then he was going to exterminate the Ukrainian people, then he was going to exterminate thirty million Russian people, then he was going to exterminate the Western intelligencia, he was going to exterminate people in Holland and in Alsace-Lorraine. Then the Nazi regime had in the works something called the German health bill, and anybody who did not meet this health bill in terms of their own physical health and also in terms of their genetic, supposedly racial, background, was also going to be exterminated.

I think it is no accident that we use the expression “nuclear holocaust,” because I feel that the situation that we’re facing now with the fear and imminent danger of nuclear war is an extension of that psychological system, and that philosophical habit of mind that produced the Nazi holocaust.

The new enemy is all of us. The holocaust was not an isolated sort of quirk in Western civilization. I think that we have to begin to regard

both Hitler and his hated enemy, the Jew, as self-portraits. We have to start to see the traditional enemy, the woman and the Jew, as a secret part of ourselves. And we also have to understand that the anti-Semite, and the misogynist, the pornographer, the Fascist, represents a self-portrait too of a habit of mind of this civilization, which we've all been taught and that is the habit of mind of creating an enemy. In fact the holocaust was an expression of a crisis that Western civilization was experiencing at the time of World War II. And the crisis is not over. We are still experiencing the same crisis with a split identity. We have now expanded the idea of the enemy and it is getting closer to home. We are coming close to an actual expression of self-hatred and to actual suicide. This is the meaning of the nuclear holocaust.

Based on a speech that Susan Griffin gave at the Faces of the Enemy Conference which was held in San Francisco, sponsored by the University of California. The other speakers were Sam Keen, Robert Bly, Ashley Montagu, William Sloane Coffin, Roshi Baker, Arthur M. Cox and Valentin Berezhkov. The purpose of the conference was to seek solutions to the problems of war "not in our weapons but in our minds." Susan Griffin delivered her speech extemporaneously.



THE DIARY OF CONSTANCE TALBOT

William C. Gosnell

What follows are some pages of a diary kept by a homeless woman named Constance Talbot. She began writing at the age of twenty four while she was living on the streets for a period of six months.

During this time she craftily found shelter in churches and university buildings in a well known New England college town. She wrote in a small black loose leaf note book which she found on a church organ shelf. This book had originally contained lists of church hymns for Sunday services. She made entries in her diary in a wide variety of places: in elegant rooms belonging to the children of professors, in empty Victorian music rooms, in quiet office hallways after hours.

Being homeless is not an easy thing for someone to endure and is for most a trying ordeal. Constance managed to survive in a hostile metropolitan environment for this period of time without any outside money or assistance. She carried such things as books, clothes, shoe laces, articles and letters in a small brown day pack. Sometimes she spent the night wrapped up in choir robes on the balcony of a Lutheran church. She spent one night in a lavishly decorated residential living room while the owners slept unknowingly on the second floor. She ate their oatmeal cookies and bananas and then left before dawn through an open window.

June 20

At times it takes so much courage to do the simplest things. To carry out actions to completion becomes a frightening occupation. It becomes a question of whether to give birth or not, whether to subject oneself to labor pains, whether to have a child. What happens to this child? Does it live? Does the fruit of one's actions live or die? Each task is a birth and a death, and serves such a temporary but necessary purpose for a brief instant of time. These fleeting moments are filled with solitary actions that serve such solitary and simple needs. Once again these needs recur and these actions, these efforts of action whose consequences may or may not be beneficial, are carried out.

June 24

It's 1:00 p.m. and I'm sitting at the Paradise Cafe watching people walking in all directions. I've noticed how frightened people are of one another, how hesitant they are to deal with one another. It's a matter of their unfounded beliefs. They are the guilty ones. They are a part of the human instinctual structure. They are a profound proof of an animalistic characteristic of aggres-



sion toward the unknown. A fear of difference, a strange apathy and yet a discreet fear of another human being. We are all sitting here watching one another, periodically noticing new things with fleeting glances, fleeting judgments, unfounded prejudices. The limited range of human perception is so evident in this environment.

June 26

At present it is approximately 8:45 p.m. and I'm resting on a bed on the second floor of Kingston House Master's lodgings. I'm in what is obviously a woman's room. The room actually looks like something out of *Architectural Digest*. I cooked spaghetti downstairs in the a very lovely kitchen —added bamboo shoots and water chestnuts to the boiling pot. The professor is on sabbatical with his family. In some ways I'm getting lost in the comfort of this house. The furniture is all antique and intricately patterned with ornamentation.

July 5

I am currently spreading marmalade jelly on stone ground wheat thin crackers I found in the basement kitchen of the University Lutheran church. And I am drinking mint Hampshire tea also found on these premises. I'm sprinkling a little cinnamon over the marmalade jelly on the cracker which sort of neutralizes the extreme sugar taste of the jelly and makes the cinnamon, marmalade and cracker combination a fairly adequate one.

July 8

Baked pound cake with paranoid schizophrenic woman named Marion at School Street shelter. She considers libraries to be scary places and believes that in order to become a librarian one must first become tall and skinny. I disagreed with her. Marion is in her early fifties and has quite a temper. Later on, managed to play Scrabble with Marion and an old man named Sal. Marion acquired thirty points for the entire game. Her first word was SINS. While Sal and I were playing, Marion made a reference to the birds chirping in the trees outside. She said, "One must have had a baby because they're singing."

July 10

I am currently at Faith Lutheran shelter on Prospect and Broadway. Came here tonight hoping to find bed. They don't have any room, so I'm lying down in a choir robe closet filled with choir robes. I don't think these robes are currently used by the Faith Lutheran choir, I think these are old robes. It's rather a confined space, this closet, in the balcony of the church. The organ is about thirty feet away from me.

July 17

Stayed at Harcove School of Music. Walked up the fire escape at 12:20 a.m. and entered through the window. Once inside, found many grand pianos. Explored building. Ate lemon yogurt from student lounge fridge. Walked upstairs to room with baby grand piano. Sat in dark. Played third movement of Bach Capriccio. Found pianos to vary in action and tone quality. Turned on lights for short period of time in room. Decided too risky, might be noticed. Purchased coffee from vending machine in student lounge. Enjoyed playing pianos. House of pianos. Harcove house of pianos. Slept for four hours on window seat. Woke at six a.m. and left by fire escape.

August 1

Stood behind door in downstairs pantry of Heidleberg Library after quickly taking mug of tomato soup out of microwave oven while cleaning woman emptied garbage pail six inches from my hand. Earlier I watched episodes of Bob Newhart on color TV in the media center room and a *Twilight Zone* episode, "Queen of the Nile."

August 5

At approximately 3 a.m. opened window of Willow Nursery School. Once inside sat quietly in reading section of playroom amongst pillows used by children during story time. Turned thermostat up to 70 degrees. Read children's books. Dr. Seuss, "Hop and Pop", and "The Seven Little Rabbits." Fell asleep and woke at 5 a.m.

August 14

Broke small courtyard window of Kingstone House Master's lodgings. Reached in and undid the latch. Opened door and stepped into living room. Furniture covered with white sheets. Grand piano in corner. Tripped floor sensitive alarm in hallway - discernable siren. Left quickly through courtyard door. Courtyard surrounded by unscalable iron spike fence. Rain coming down in buckets. Ran into Kingston House student quarters. Left through student quarters window onto side street by Regent College athletic center. Stepped off Regent property as police car sped by me, lights flashing. Walked quickly into bookstore on Markus Avenue.

August 19

I am currently in the Folklore and Mythology building in back of Holy Cross church on Tucker Street. I'm not sure if I was seen entering the building through the back door which happened to have been open. I'm eating raisins obtained from the fridge.

August 24

It is approximately 8:20 a.m. Cooked Spanish rice for breakfast on stove in University Lutheran kitchen - large gas stove with ten burners. Rather efficient stove in terms of cooking ability. Washed dishes and pot used for Spanish rice and returned them to their places. Last night I used one blanket from a plastic bag of newly washed blankets marked "7 blankets" and two sheets from another bag marked "20 clean sheets." Returned blanket and sheets to bags.



August 29

Remaining alone with an undeveloped mind while enduring great pains will only ensure that scars will remain forever in my thoughts, taunting my decisions with connotations of pain. Is the whole world completely insensitive? Are the majority of people hiding in fear of being misunderstood? Are they wise to hide? Do they somehow know that approaching others with pleasant or critical words will only provoke superficial judgements to be placed upon them?—petty judgements which are all the majority is capable of. Do they know that people young and old can only see so far and the limit of these perceptions destroy what could otherwise be something of value? In the daytime you walk around and you know that limited interaction is all that is possible. And it is not you who are limited so much as the distorted perceptions of society.

September 9

Went to Deerfield City Hospital psychiatric emergency room and spoke to person there. After speaking for awhile with him he said, "Your use of vocabulary and the fact that you seem so articulate gives me the impression that you've had some education. Have you gone to college?" "No, just high school", I said. "What high school?", he asked inquisitively as if it had been some high class private place. "Only a public school," I replied. He gave me some tranquilizers and I left.

September 18

Felt dizzy after sitting in Robertson Park. Took bus to Deerfield City Hospital. Beautiful, intelligent doctor gave me a check up. It was so wonderful. I wish I had said something to him like, "I really enjoyed touching your finger in the hand-nose coordination test." I still feel a little dizzy—and even though the doctor said it was probably due to a lack of food, I still wonder.



BRIEF AUTHORITY: FRAGMENTS OF ONE WOMAN'S TESTAMENT

by Rebecca Pitts. New York: Vantage, 1986.

Reviewed by Susan Bettis

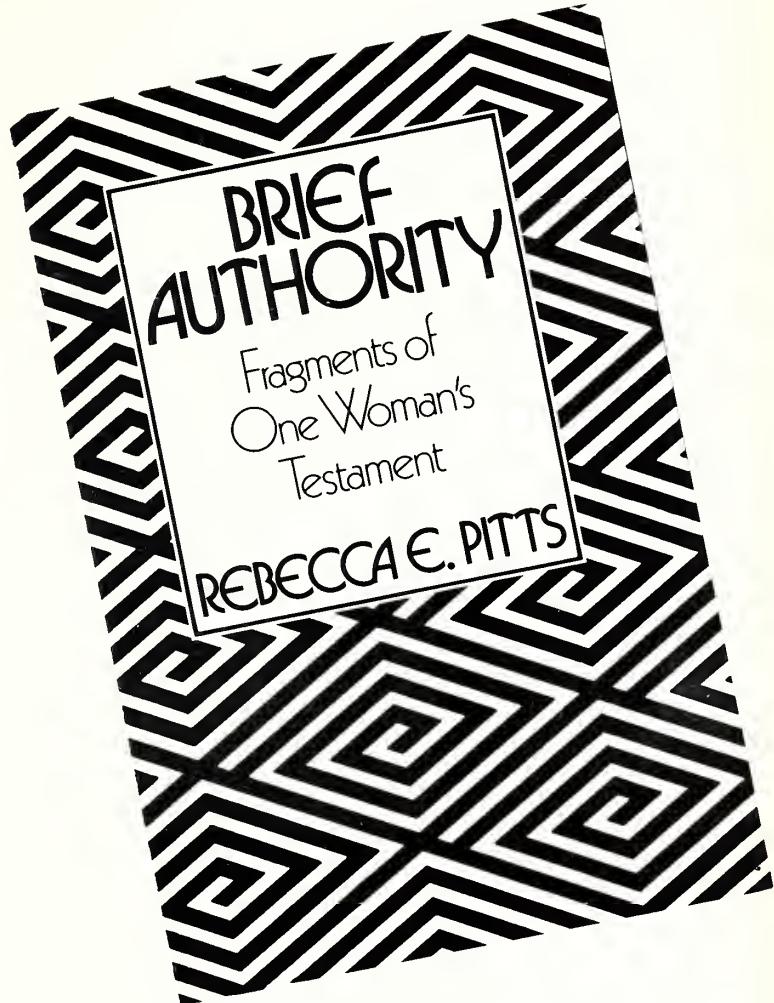
The voice in *Brief Authority* is the voice of a woman contemplating her approaching death, trying to distill a lifetime of experience and reflection into a collection of poetry. Rebecca Pitts burned all her youthful poems during her forties and didn't begin this volume of poetry till she was seventy-two. Here she presents her contribution to one of our century's most compelling tasks: the need to reconcile science and religion.

Hers is a feminist reconciliation which uses evolution, the big bang theory and ancient goddess rituals to symbolize inner spiritual processes. Although one could not classify Pitts as an essentialist feminist who defines woman by her bodily experience, she is nevertheless imaginatively aware of the visualization and understanding achieved by using the body and related gender experience as metaphor.

Her connection of feminine bodily cycles with the cycles of biological and cosmic evolution and with the spiritual cycles of ego death and rebirth helps to fill the gaps created by literal religion and material science. And she prescribes feminine values and feminist critiques of culture as antidotes to the unmediated masculinity of patriarchy and the excesses of its technology. Contemplation of death, a cosmic spiritual quest, and angry political exhortation, then, combine to reveal an electrifying vision of life.

Her five major groups of imagery anchor this vision: fire—as the symbol of both cosmic beginnings and nuclear endings; water—as biological beginnings, the “vast genetic broth” from which emerged evolutionary life (“Sea Figure”); dance—as life itself; harvest—as the death process; and vision—with its opposites of light and dark as both the experience and the outcome of the mystical journey toward wisdom.

The book is divided into three major sections, but the poems in each are too complex to fit neatly into exclusive categories. However, the poems in “The Dance” are mainly those which explore time and death, ancient feminine mystery rituals, and the inner world of dreams, meditation and vision. Those in “The World in Our Heart” celebrate the earthly life, its brevity and joy, and its need to be informed by the wisdom of the spiritual life. The final poems in “But Man, Proud Man” are the most political,



those which lament the threats of biocide and nuclear annihilation, the end of human life.

It is her own approaching death which Pitts contemplates in “Setting Out,” one of several dream poems involving watery journeys. Here, her “last look at memory” and her “first glimpse of unborn time beyond this hour” merge “...as if the vast heart of the sea merged in one beat systole and diastole.” Visions of moments past return to the dying soul and

dear Life quickens and redeems
moments long lost wild strawberries tasted
on a summer hill
or a moonlit meadow circled with dark trees:...

A student of Jungian psychology, Pitts frequently traveled the dark watery world of dreams, and in “Song for a Voyager” she calls that journey to the world of inner spaces the “one journey and one journey only.” In “The Horn Gate” she warns “Yet beware, voyager.

You cannot find/ that radiant Stranger in such emptiness/ as yawns within you." One must face the

dim hideous beasts; forms, words, that come
to mirror
shards of your life unlived or lived in places
better forgot than lingered in. These traces—
all corpsed—must be ejected from deep slime
and looked at. They're what's yours. (For the
far sea-spaces
of Mind, true Mind—these are not yours.) In
time
you'll cry, "This dark thing is mine own."
But there—
where you touch ruin—lies medicine for
despair.

It is the death of the ego which must be suffered in order for the spirit to resurrect. Thus, in "A Dream of Meaning" the poet explores the meaning of one dream which leads her toward vision and "far-gazing" and away from worldly power or wealth, away from the "spoiled eye" or the "colossal 'I.'

It is not the worldly accomplishment of linear human history which most interests Pitts. Rather, she celebrates the feminine eternal processes of birth, death and rebirth: the repetition and eternity of both cyclical and monumental time described by Julia Kristeva in her essay, "Women's Time."¹ The partly autobiographical "Advent and Eleusis" portrays women's time in a fusion of recent births and deaths in the lives of Pitts' friends with those cosmic goddess mysteries which celebrate "The ripe soul's going."

Pitts dedicates "Advent and Eleusis" to her friend Muriel Rukeyser who died in February, 1980. (She knew Rukeyser during the twelve years she spent in New York and at Yaddo before being called home to her ailing mother in Indianapolis. Rukeyser always called on Pitts' Advent-season birthday.) The fusion of the cosmic and the personal is italicized for her by a baby shower at a discussion group meeting which happened to occur on Advent Sunday, 1979 and by the felt absence of the usual call from the then-ailing Rukeyser. The poem's themes come together as she describes both Rukeyser's "...knowing so deeply/ what shell must be broken in birth that is also death" and Rukeyser poems which

celebrate mystery:
sing birth sing the glad running of children
sing the true grace the meaning the depth
of promise in women
sing above all the arrival of new meanings
and the burst of Light when the quick Spirit
comes.

In "Sea Figure" the water birth of human life

itself is celebrated. The poet echoes ancient religious reverence for both the ocean and woman's body, with its ocean-like amniotic fluid, as the sources of biological life. The source of "the vast genetic broth" is:

...varied, incredibly prodigal, blind to the
death in her green caves—
spawning life, freezing her fossils, now and
then tossing landward
some of her only partly successful odd
creations...

Here, echoing an ancient ritual chant, Pitts urges contemporary mystics to go to the sea, as did those worshipers at ancient Eleusis and as did those women refugees from the Inquisition. "For all those who would see the fullness/ of harvested truth at Eleusis must come to this place." She presents the sea as both source and symbol of life, as "Mother and memory of all Life," as the love goddess symbolizing timeless renewals, and as:

Image of latent Mind creating Life in the
waters,
image of limitless possibility
for Life on this planet perhaps on a myriad
others,
she is pointing forever toward Mind and its
inner oceanic spaces.

The section "The World in Our Heart" continues the concern with genesis, and in the highly condensed and multilayered "Beginnings," Pitts celebrates fiery—rather than watery—beginnings. Pitts sees Space-Time as the source and symbol of fiery transformations: "...a twin blaze out of some black zero/ state of potential." She ponders the mysterious beginnings of human speech and capacity for abstract thought, and the "leaping-awake" of Mind which builds the Eye in each new species.

"Fire-fearers, fire-stealers, and in the end fire-makers," we received our most human gift of speech from "tongues of fire"; and all came to us from the new Mind that was both kindled and kindler. She has moved beyond the judgmental white father, the masculine creator in the heavens, to Meaning that is "purpose, wrapt in mystery." ("Meditation")

Fire is associated primarily with men: from Adam's fire-stick in "A Sestina for Mother Eve" to the scarred and blistered country created by patriarchy's nuclear installations in "Hunter Moon." But in "A Sestina for Mother Eve" Pitts offers us the feminine aspects of fire and light: the hearth as "the focus of history"; the "flame from a sky-flash" which kindled knowledge in Eve; and the true greatness of human history, "the Inner Light of creation." According to Pitts, Eve

. . . led humankind into history
out of cold speechless caves. For being a
woman,
she was receptive to rumor and heard the
Voice; and being Its daughter,
she was linked to Its pregnant silence and
hushed promise of creation.
So when clumsy "Adam" lurched into the
cave and swung his new fire-stick there
in the hollow half-dark, she foresaw the whole
terrible story,
dimly foresaw it all, and accepted.

It was Eve "who stared at the flame and brooded, whose third Eye opened and saw creation." "A Sestina for Mother Eve" gives us a symbolic condensed version of Merlin Stone's theory of Genesis which sees the snake not as a symbol of evil but as a symbol of resurrection and mystic vision, in accordance with ancient mother worship.² "Don't call them phallic symbols," the poet warns, but rather see them as "vessels of sacred venom, to sting into visions of history/ antique oracular sibyls."

In this second section, Pitts' politics have become obvious. "In the Kitchen (I)" criticizes Carl Jung for his sexist reductionism, his relegation of women to "their cramped domestic finitude." On a symbolic level she recognizes the multiple possibilities of his use of the kitchen as "a perfect image for the endless work of self creation." But she chides this twentieth century shaman and medicine man:

serene on his height, secure above the
cluttered cupboards,
the kettle that nearly boils over into the quiet
madness, the
greasy stacks of dishes, the whining children,
the creaky pump,
the stopped-up drain, the vista of monotonous
days
destined to lengthen, with their back-breaking
burden of
stooping over a soiled sink, into the
heart-breaking
funeral of the future.

"In the Kitchen (II)" transforms the image into its opposite as the poet lovingly remembers the pansies and nasturtiums in her mother's orderly kitchen. In the family house she inherited, the table that once featured old-fashioned, chicken-fried round steak and "creamy new peas and potatoes" now features

. . . vitamins, books, and feminist papers—
with pamphlets on rape, on toxic waste, on
countless endangered species . . .

Still criticizing Jung who condescendingly associates women with finitude and the body, she asserts that for her mother she would praise

finitude. And it is in this kitchen that she reconnects to her mother and begins to realize that

In those late years of quiet accepting—of
loneliness and well-doing—
of weeping and missing your departed
children—
it wasn't for him, or for us, you planted phlox
and peonies,
trained roses to climb the kitchen porch, fed
redbirds and sparrows,
hung on your clothesline a tiny home for
the wrens,
who sometimes perched there between your
very fingers.

This image of the mother drawing a strength and self-renewal from nature reminds one of the image in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* when the protagonist remembers her mother feeding and training the birds to perch on her shoulders as she stretches her hand out to them.³

Like Atwood's protagonist, Pitts too preaches environmental politics, transforming the mother's connection to nature into the verbal warrior's protection of it. All of the poems in the final section, "But Man, Proud Man," cry to save the earth of which the poet is so viscerally enamored. "If Men Loved Life" echoes Rosemary Reuther's *New Woman New Earth* in blaming Cartesian duality and patriarchy's "sterile reason and either-or logic" unredeemed by the more feminine "gifts of imagination and compassion" for the threats of biocide and nuclear annihilation.⁴ Pitts warns:

Good servant of worthy ends, but a sinister
master,
such reason powers now on a deep buried wish
of the forgetful
who are only for themselves—under whose
heedless hands
the last World Teacher of technical man (his
blind, mechanical Messiah)
plods on—at incredible speeds, to be sure, but
plodding and mindlessly pointing
only to mastery of means, but not—not to that
hidden end.

At times compelling, this poem occasionally loses its force to excess commentary. The angry poet—perhaps the dying poet—is unable to force herself to edit.

"World Sacrifice" treats the same theme far more successfully, more poetically. In its opening lines this lament recognizes the positive contributions of science and technology which gave us the photographic image of the whole earth:

O loveliest, afloat around the sun
in her blue bubble—her jeweled atmosphere—
she catches the breath with her strange
splendor
seen now at last from space.

The poet then uses the revelations of modern physics in her mystical contemplation of this holistic image:

...and time's arrow of direction
flies toward a distant dark and absolute zero;
but on the way what miracle, what wonder!
from that first flash—eternally improbable—
that burst of Light, or Fire, through intricate
ballets,
wave-particle events that danced to form
trillions on trillions of galaxies, then stars—
among them ours—and here, among these
planets,
lonely, sapphire, and fragile—again ours.

The images in this passage, like those in other of her cosmic poems, call to mind the fluidly electric—often explosive—canvases of Lee Krasner, Jackson Pollack and Helen Frankenthaler. Pitts is clearly a poet of her times. Not only, then, does this culmination poem repeat her cosmic dance and fire images, but as she moves into the political, she presents the planet's necessary ecological balance as a product of the cycles of life and their sacrificial nature:

Then with sacrifice as companion all these
peoples
come out of mystery into the great world
rite: . . .
all die for other life, live on the death
of others.

Pitts then utters a plaintive litany of greed, vanishing species, poisoned fertility and starving children. She predicts that "Soon science will feed us/ more than we'd hoped for." The despair of "World Sacrifice" is relieved only partly by the book's final poem, "Strict Is the Charge." This poem reminds us that the mind can be charged, the will broken, until "haunted perspectives open,/ echo, and enlarge." Thus the fate of the earth remains in the hands of us the living.

It is significant that many of these poems were written during the last two years of Pitts' life when she knew she was dying of cancer, and all of them were written during her seventies. She is wistful when watching young roller skaters on the San Diego boardwalk in "On the Beach" and nostalgic about the life of the senses in "Setting Out." But ultimately it is the inner life, the "one journey and one journey only." ("Song for a Voyager") which transcends proud man's brief authority. Just as the "morning hieroglyphics" of

the prolonged track of the gull's foot,
stars left by the pigeons,
the tiny asterisks of sandpipers.

("Hieroglyphics") are soon washed from the sand, so too the authority of the ancient Egyptians, that of their successor Sadat, and that of the poet are brief indeed in the span of human history.

Too soon all become "those whom death has harvested" ("Advent and Eleusis").

It was fitting that Rebecca Pitts died in October; for it was autumn and its harvest transition which symbolized dying for her, not the already-dead of winter. My favorite poem, "Meditation," ends:

And bright leaves fall now from that
bronzing tree,
taking the heart with beauty as they go.
Time will not stop for them that's plain to see,
nor stay with us who linger, wistfully,
while red September berries fade. And so
we cling to Time and want Eternity.
The bright fire fades, the coals die down,
and we
are soon for bed indeed, but the late glow
has made Time seem to pause, and now I see
what Time is for. To mean Eternity.

Technically Pitts' poems are uneven. One wishes that she had lived long enough to tighten some of them up, the ones that rely heavily on prose for explanations and questioning aloud. With the exception of "World Sacrifice," her clearly political poems tend to emphasize message at the expense of medium. Sometimes her anger deteriorates into polemic, her despair into cliche. Some dream messages are abstruse. Her use of language, however, is forceful, often compelling. The poems have a directness and simplicity about them, and their images are fresh and vivid. She achieves the compression and imaginative visualization of the seasoned poet although she didn't begin this effort until six years before her death.

The worldview presented in *Brief Authority* is profound and timely. It will be treasured especially by feminists, environmentalists and mystics, all those seeking to unite the truths of a post-Einsteinian world with the human necessities of spiritual expression and freedom. Despite the brevity of the body of her work, this woman raises a voice of power, clarity and compassion. For these are the poems of a wise old woman. She deserves to be heard, to assert her brief authority beyond death.

Susan Bettis is a former English teacher and professor who is currently a feminist scholar and lecturer. She is writing a book on the need to restore to contemporary culture the feminine metaphors and images found in worldwide mythology, religion, art and literature. Bettis lives in Indianapolis.

Notes:

¹ Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," *Signs*, VII, 1 (Autumn, 1981), 13-35.

² Merlin Stone, *When God Was A Woman*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Harvest, 1976).

³ Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972).

⁴ Rosemary Reuther, *New Woman New Earth*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975).

WORLD SACRIFICE

1

O loveliest, afloat around the sun
in her blue bubble—her jeweled atmosphere—
she catches the breath with her strange splendor
seen now at last from space.

Her mystery stupefies and stops the mind
looking for origins; surely she has been woven
out of the all-embracing mystery of the real.
Call this a random universe if you must,
for clearly a shuffled deck of cards will never
reorder itself, and time's arrow of direction
flies toward a distant dark and absolute zero;
but on the way what miracle, what wonder!
from that first flash—eternally improbable—
that burst of Light, or Fire, through intricate ballets,
wave-particle events that danced to form
trillions on trillions of galaxies, then stars—
among them ours—and her, among these planets,
lonely, sapphire, and fragile—again ours.

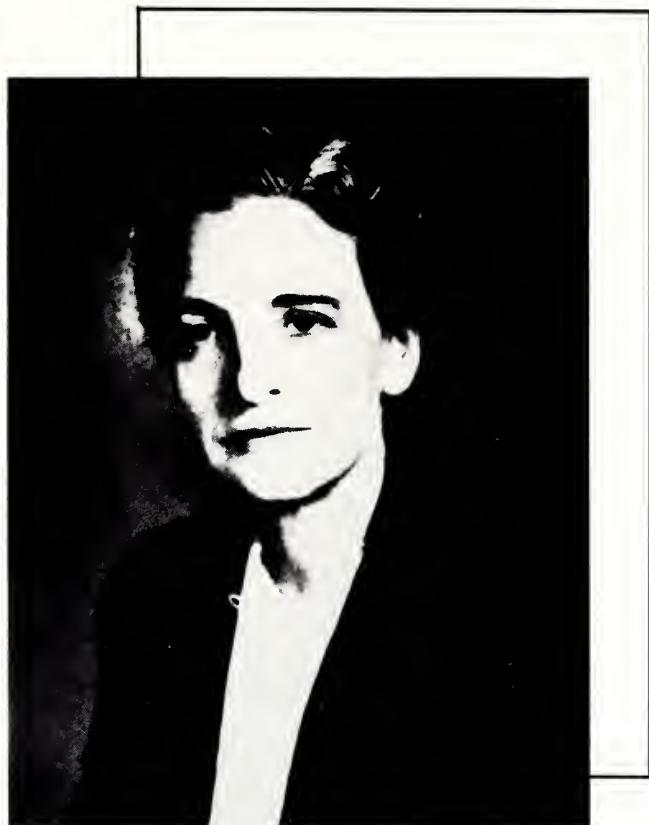
Floating, O loveliest, in her blue bubble...
whose deepest mystery, however
lies not in her sweet numinous presence here,
nor in that first live cell, shocked into being
somehow, by ray or lightning, but in the web
of living forms that followed—endless variety
woven of oneness: think how the genes of algae
(given some difference in complexity)
work like the snake's, the porpoise's, and ours.

And yet, we are told, our own genetic messages
are broken by something queer—they call it "meaningless"—
long strips of empty intervening sequences
science cannot decode. It just might be, however,
that there's a blank check Nature has handed over
to our unfinished species
where we might write our future and the Earth's.

2

She has given us clues, hints of a living whole
wherein no solitary form survives:
where the cells of human bodies
depend on micro-aliens; where green plants
let out their cells to photosynthetic lodgers
so that the sun may feed them and feed us
not only food but air; where predator and prey,
rain and rain forest, move in a strict balance.

Then with sacrifice as companion all these peoples
come out of mystery into the great world rite:
aware or not (old species, like the whales,
seem more aware than we), willing or not,
all die for other life, live on the death of others.
Exquisite web and fragile, man has torn you
almost beyond repair. Long has he taken
("winner take all") with no exchange, no giving



Rebecca E. Pitts

back to the living wholeness. Look, now, the desert is creeping stealthy and sure across the desiccated fields of his progress. Look how, like Nero—idiot Nero, who tore his mother's womb to see where he was got—he is still ravaging her depths, soiling her surface, who first received him into her arms. Late-born among her children.

3

Now they are going
those others
and bewildered
eyes that see dimly
in pain or hunger
search vainly
old havens once felt as home
not enemy territory.

They come out of mystery
into the arms of Earth-life
and find
not the old fertile embrace of life-and-death
but only
Death.

What can we say to you
who are going before us?
We cannot even sit beside you
infant whale
cast up on the gritty sands
our poisons in your blood.

We ought to be able to touch you
with the tenderness of a grieving mother
if we loved enough
we might share your fading
memories of song
your memories
of your own cherishing mother
we could sing other songs to you
our own songs of a day
when Life was a mother.

What can we say now
to all who are leaving
before us?

How can we comfort you
harp seal mother
sobbing, ripped open with grief,
where snow is red
your once beautiful baby
bloody
flayed utterly
still living?

Can we hope to persuade you
that this was necessary
this sacrifice
a part of the great world rite
this offering to a furrier's greed
and to that deeper lust of our modern Moloch
the death-desiring hunger
of macho human creatures

with their singular "rites of passage"?

What can we ever say to you
who are going before us?

Out of approaching silence
a diminished thunder
of arriving wings

One robin is chirping today
merrily
on my city lawn
where once there were ten,
And in wilder haunts
singers who come to feed
linger to die
silvery intervals
of reed or horn
hover and are still
Even if we loved enough
we could not comfort such wildness
and the eagle
the fierce falcon
would spurn us rightly.

Emblems
of another music...
of our vanishing freedom...
in your going
it is ourselves we mourn.
Must we say to you,
"We can live without birds?"

4

A long procession
hopeless
they leave us now
those great perfected species.
True, they have always been going
but they have gone slowly
fading into the flux of the future
always to be replaced
by those who restored the balance.

If they killed it was only for need
and the lion walked harmless near the herd
when he had no hunger.

Now in their silent departure
they look back
they wait a little
the great sequoias withering
the rain forests dying
and a long sigh seems to tremble
on the polluted air
a question they who present it
may never understand
nor this victorious species...
ours.

Oh, when will you be finished?
What have you given?
What did you ever have to give?



Species more lethal than the tiger
but far less beautiful
can the murderous spawn of your cities
replace that fearful symmetry
with another less terrible
but just as perfect?

Your tanks are more powerful
than the great gray elephant
but they have never moved
with his lumbering grace
they are not directed by his wisdom.

You have fingers
which the dolphins have not
and fingers create writing
and technology
but can your vaunted structures
of social organization
equal the playful intelligent harmony
of this finer species
the compassion the Confucian good manners
the hatred of falsehood
the subtle effectiveness in education
the delicate interpersonal complexities
the love without guilt and fear?

We were not here only
for an organic balance
for the fertility of Earth
we were here also for a deeper reason
you have not fathomed.

Oh, when will you be finished?

5

Shall we then say to you
who are going before us:

We too have shared in the
great world rite.

True, we have killed
but only for need.

We needed the earth
and we took it.

We were told, so we thought, to be fruitful
and we were
(look at those towers, those arsenals of steel and information)
and to multiply

Oh, how we did
(those millions of gaunt
bloat-bellied hollow-eyed
children)

We needed the earth
and we took it.

Now we no longer need you.
Before long science will feed us.

But we know all that to be falsehood.
We were also "told" (and somehow we knew it)
to replenish the Earth
and there were other possible choices
not made

for reasons we need not go into
here.

There were roads not taken
not this unending
ever-widening asphalt
but roads wandering away from
all this desert
into a green freedom
half wilderness

Go then and tell them
who have vanished before you
into the dim fastnesses
of a darker garden
tell them
the irreplaceable
who wait for you
that in truth we no longer need you
as sacrifice.
Soon science will feed us
more than we hoped for.

Tell them who wait for you
and for us
yes, and for Her
floating, O loveliest, around the sun
tell them
we are almost finished.

Rebecca E. Pitts





Mary Cassatt, *The Letter*, 1891

THE INFLUENCE OF UKIYO-E AND UTAMARO ON THE WORK OF MARY CASSATT

Elizabeth Lindsay

Mary Cassatt was born in 1844 in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. She died in 1926 at her Chateau de Beaufresne, Mesnil-Theribus, France. Cassatt remained an American, but accomplished her major work in France. As Eleanor Munro proposes, in *Originals: American Women Artists* (1979), Cassatt was, as the age demanded, a "proper lady," who took as one of her most important themes the depiction of mother and child; was primly repulsed by the goings-on at Gertrude Stein's salon, and yet, in her later years, espoused socialism and women's suffrage.¹ She never married, intending instead to devote all her energy to her art. During what might have been her most productive years, however, she found herself responsible for much of the care of her invalid sister and an aging mother.

This dichotomy is reflected in her work. The earlier oils are admirable: well-drawn and competently painted. But it was in her meticulous print-making that Cassatt came into her own. She seemed to thrive on its technical difficulty.

Critical appraisal of Cassatt's work has also been divided. There are those who insist that, without her close association with the Paris Impressionists, she never would have come up with inspiration for her works at all. She herself admitted to a fascination with Correggio's mother-and-child paintings, which she studied in Italy. Like many of her contemporaries, she was excited by the torrid canvases of Velazquez. She also is known to have admired Rubens, Manet, and Courbet.

Jean Lipman and Helen M. Franc, in *Bright Stars: American Painting and Sculpture Since 1776* (1976), credit Cassatt with

a vigorous, independent personality... her paintings were differentiated in several respects from those of the other Impressionists. Her forms remained solid, not dissolved by color and light, and a certain adherence to naturalism gave her art a distinctively American flavor.²

Cassatt, it would seem, despite being an anomaly as a person, and perhaps, as an artist, somehow retained a sense of American practicality.

The Editors of *Art in America*, in *The Artist in America* (1967), describe her paintings of mothers and children as "full of charm and sentiment."³ Richard McLanathan, in *The American Tradition*

in the Arts (1968), referring to the same paintings, finds they are "Pictures of great charm... devoid of sentimentality... based upon an objective realism of form and a quiet awareness of individual personality."⁴

What Cassatt did share wholeheartedly with her fellow Impressionists, was an enthusiasm for the Japanese woodcut prints. Her admiration culminated in the most difficult and rewarding task of her career. The way she translated these prints into her own exacting language is described by Colta Feller Ives in *The Great Wave* (1974):

As she transplanted Ukiyo-e bathers and kimonoed mothers to French boudoirs, Cassatt converted the medium of the Japanese color woodcut to the processes she knew best: using metal plates instead of woodblocks, she drew in drypoint over broad soft-ground etching lines; the colors were applied by hand to an aquatint ground. Sometimes, like the Japanese, Cassatt had to prepare additional plates in order to align varied colors and patterns in the same picture. Printing the plates was a monumental task.⁵

Cassatt not only incorporated Japanese aspects into her art, but did her best to replicate the very form in which the Ukiyo-e art had been published. She made the form her own, and, in the process, produced her most original and satisfying work.

It was almost inevitable that the Impressionists should be drawn to the Japanese woodcuts. According to Margaret Gentles, in *Masters of the Japanese Print* (1964), these prints had their "beginnings in the earlier genre screen and scroll paintings concerning the joy of life."⁶ They depicted scenes of everyday activities and amusements, subjects esteemed by the Impressionists.

Before 1854, Japanese art had been rare in Europe, until Matthew Perry's renewed trade brought, first, the popular decorative arts to European attention. Prints began showing up as extraneous packing material, as cushions for more highly-prized objects. It was 1867, at the Paris Universal Exposition, Ives says, when the French were introduced to the "first formal exhibition of Japanese art... Woodcut prints... remained the special province of the avant-garde."⁷

Woodblock printing had been introduced into Japan from China, along with Buddhism, ten centuries before. Toshi Yoshida and Rei Yuki, in *Japanese Print Making* (1966), explain that during the Edo period (1603-1867), anonymously illus-



Mary Cassatt, *The Bath*, 1891

trated literature paralleled the rise of the merchant class. Out of this literature grew the *ezoshi*, or picture book. In 1632, a single sheet from one of these books was published in black and white. By 1700, a few colors were being applied to the prints with a brush, and several decades later, lacquer was added for special effect on parts of the picture, to make these parts stand out. In 1745, with the invention of the *kento*, which allowed for exact positioning of paper on the block, colors were applied during printing, and the resulting print was a *benizuri-e*, or 'a picture with crimson'. The culmination of *ukiyo-e*, the *nishiki-e*, or 'brocade picture', was perfected by Harunobu Suzuki in 1765, and used a series of blocks, and *hosho*, a paper tough enough to withstand numerous impressions.⁸

Ukiyo-e means 'pictures of the floating world', and Yoshida and Yuki say that the technique responsible for its beauty is passed from generation to generation. Many specially-made tools are required, and only the most accomplished artists are ever allowed to carve the more exacting details onto the blocks.⁹

As early as 1856, according to Ives, the etcher Bracquemond shared a book of Hokusai's *Manga*, 'sketches', with Manet. And in the 1860s, the famous Goncourts' *Journals* made frequent references to Japanese art. In 1883, Louis Gonse published a two-volume edition of *L'Art Japonais*.¹¹ In 1890, the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* exhibited "more than a thousand prints and illustrated books from private collections."¹²

Manet was the first to respond in his paintings to the flatness of the Japanese prints.¹³ While Degas, in 1868, showed an oriental wall-hanging in his portrait of James Tissot, his Japanese borrowings were usually more subtly implied in his "use of line, the daring foreshortenings, and unusual organization of space... [from] about 1875." His use of two figures, rather than the more usual three, may have been inspired by Haranobu's woodcuts.¹⁴ Degas's cropping of parts of figures, rather than an influence from Japanese prints, was probably an outgrowth of his interest in photography.¹⁵

Although the *Ukiyo-e* prints undoubtedly influenced Cassatt's earlier work, it was not until she came upon the work of Utamaro at the 1890 exhibition, that she knew she had found a kindred spirit. It was then that she began her series of ten aquatints, as Ives tells us.



Kitagawa Utamaro, *A Mother Bathing Her Son*, 18th century

Utamaro's intimate treatment of motherly love immediately endeared his art to Cassatt. No artist of the *Ukiyo-e* school handled scenes of parent/child relationship more sympathetically than he... Cassatt first approached the mother/child theme via Correggio; she introduced it in her drypoint sketches about 1889. But not until her encounter with Utamaro's prints was her handling of the subject fully realized... She copied Utamaro's themes, his compositions, his colors, even some of his wispy-haired oriental heads. She also borrowed the print format Utamaro generally used, the upright *oban*, about fifteen by ten inches. As a result, her color aquatints were larger than most contemporary French prints.¹⁶

Cassatt's *The Tub*¹⁷ and Utamaro's *A Mother Bathing Her Son*¹⁸ both show basically plain, unadorned backgrounds, and Cassatt's only indication of depth is in a short line separating wall from floor. The Japanese wooden tub has been converted to a ceramic container by Cassatt. The angle of the mothers' bodies is almost the same in both prints, although Cassatt does not allow her mother quite the same awkwardness of pose; nor does her child show



Mary Cassatt, *Young Woman*, 1891



Mary Cassatt, *The Coiffure*, 1891

any evidence of almost comic duress, as does Utamaro's.

Cassatt's *Maternal Caress*¹⁹ seems much warmer, less studied, and more relaxed. In it, she uses the same approximate colors as Utamaro's *Mother and sleepy child*²⁰, except that Cassatt's black of the mother's hair is less intense. Both mothers incline forward, holding sleepy children, but Cassatt's woman is seated in a chair, delicately slipcovered, and the child is tenderly embraced close to the mother's body. Utamaro's mother is cradling a child, too, but in outstretched arms, away from her body. Cassatt includes in her print a drapery, in the same pattern as the chair's cover, just behind and aside from the mother's inclined head; Utamaro shows a plain, single-stitched drapery behind the mother's head, also mimicing the angle of the head's slant. Cassatt's mother wears a gown of flowered fabric which drapes softly, much as the silken kimona in Utamaro's print. "The prevalence of all-over floral patterns in her work of the 1890s," says Frederick A. Sweet in *Miss Mary Cassatt* (1966), "is due in some measure to the influence of Indian and Persian art."²¹ Cassatt was known to have collected Persian miniatures, as well as

Japanese prints.

Cassatt's *Woman Bathing*²² and *The Coiffure*²³ both include mirrors, and each shows a woman's back and nape of neck which the Japanese, according to Ives, "thought . . . her most expressive and appealing physical features."²⁴ Degas, also, had used similar themes as early as the 1870s.

*The Letter*²⁵ is almost a literal translation of the pose of Utamaro's *Portrait of the oiran Hinzauru*²⁶. In her westernized version, Cassatt has filled in the background with a writing desk and flowered wallpaper, but it is somewhat ironic that her gentlewoman holds paper to her lips in the same gesture "often seen," says Harold P. Stern in *Master Prints of Japan* (1969), "in erotic Japanese prints and paintings to indicate the boredom of the prostitute while the sexual act is taking place."²⁷ What a remarkable transfiguration of artistic ideas!

Although Cassatt made occasional forays into printmaking into the late 1890s, she never again achieved the polished excellence of her series of ten aquatints. What she had learned from her intimate relationship with Japanese prints remained. *The Boating Party*²⁸, 1893/94, shows her moving away from Impressionism in her painting. It retains the Japanese influence, not in its bold colors as much as in its foreshortening and strong composition. As late as 1909, in the oil *Antoinette at her Dressing Table*²⁹, Cassatt employs Utamaro's favorite mirrors, subdued colors, shimmering folds of gown and downcast eyes of the subject. And, as in so many of her works, there is barely a hint of shadow.

Cassatt, like many of her contemporaries, turned the mundane scenes of everyday life into art. That her everyday existence was bourgeoisie was no fault of hers. She was on intimate terms with her subjects, but in her portrayals, she never patronized them. She never stepped beyond the bounds of decorum to invade their privacy.

Elizabeth Lindsay (b. 1933) is a recent graduate of Mankato State University. A poet and writer, she paints wild, improbable watercolors to free the creative angels, and is hopelessly addicted to women's art history.



Notes

¹Eleanor Munro, *Originals: American Women Artists* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979, pp. 59-74.

²Jean Lipman and Helen M. Frank, *Bright Stars: American Painting and Sculpture Since 1776* New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976, p. 93.

³The *Artist in America*, compiled by the Editors of *Art in America* New York: W.W. Norton, 1967, p. 119.

⁴Richard McLanathan, *The American Tradition in the Arts* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968, p. 327.

⁵Colta Feller Ives, *The Great Wave* New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1974, p. 45.

⁶Margaret Gentles, *Masters of the Japanese Print* Netherlands: The Asia Society, 1964, pp. 13, 14.

⁷Ives, p. 11.

⁸Toshi Yoshida and Rei Yuki, *Japanese Print-Making* Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1966, pp. 19, 20.

⁹Yoshida and Yuki, pp. 25-50.

¹⁰Ives, p. 12.

¹¹Ives, pp. 12, 13.

¹²Ives, p. 14.

¹³Ives, p. 17.

¹⁴Ives, pp. 34, 35.

¹⁵Ives, pp. 38, 39.

¹⁶Ives, p. 46.

¹⁷Mary Cassatt, *The Tub*. Drypoint, soft-ground etching, and aquatint, eleventh state; printed in color; from a series of ten. 1891. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 16.2.7. Ives, p. 46.

¹⁸Kitagawa Utamaro, 1753-1806, *A Mother Bathing Her Son*, Oban, nishiki-e, mica on the bottom, 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Nelson-Atkins Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri (Nelson Fund). Published in Harold P. Stern, *Master Prints of Japan* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969, p. 210.

¹⁹Mary Cassatt, *Maternal Care*. Drypoint, soft-ground etching and aquatint, third estate; printed in color; from a series of ten. 1891. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 16.2.5. Ives, p. 48.

²⁰Kitagawa Utamaro, 1753-1806, *Mother and sleepy child: midnight, the hour of the rat*. Color woodcut from the series *Customs of Women in Twelve Hours*. About 1795. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rogers Fund, 1922. no. 1278. Ives, p. 49.

²¹Frederick A. Sweet, *Miss Mary Cassatt Norman*: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966, p. 116.

²²Mary Cassatt, *Woman Bathing*. Drypoint, soft-ground etching, and aquatint, fifth state; printed in color; from a series of ten. 1891. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 16.2.2. Ives, p. 55.

²³Mary Cassatt, *The Coiffure*. Drypoint, soft-ground etching, and aquatint, fourth state; printed in color; from a series of ten. 1891. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 16.2.3. Ives, p. 54.

²⁴Ives, p. 41.

²⁵Mary Cassatt, *The Letter*. Drypoint, soft-ground etching, and aquatint, third state; printed in color; from a series of ten. 1891. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 16.2.9. Ives, p. 52.

²⁶Kitagawa Utamaro, 1733-1806, *Portrait of the oiran Hinzauru*. Color woodcut. About 1796. Art Institute of Chicago. Ives, p. 53.

²⁷Harold P. Stern, *Master Prints of Japan* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969, p. 222.

²⁸Mary Cassatt, *The Boating Party*, 1893/94. Oil on canvas, 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 46 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Chester Dale Collection, 1962. E. John Bullard, Mary Cassatt New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1972, p. 56.

²⁹Mary Cassatt, *Antoinette at Her Dressing Table*, 1909. Oil on canvas, 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Collection of Mrs. Samuel E. Johnson, Chicago, Illinois. Bullard, p. 80.

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Mary Cassatt, *In the Omnibus*, 1891

GETTING AHEAD WITH THE WASH

Marguerite O. Hanselman

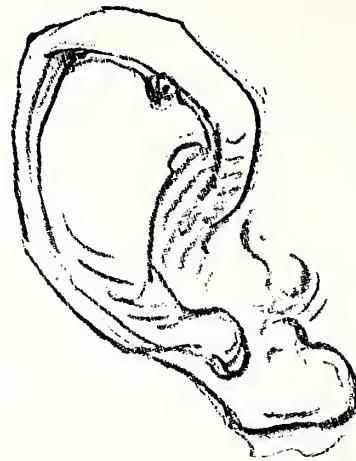
Lois pawed at the clump of underwear and socks lying in the bottom of the dryer. Two loads a day, day in and day out, but some loads were easier than others. Jeans weren't bad; after they dried, there were only five or six of them to fold but underwear and socks were another story. On top of the liny dryer were piles of socks, all single—some new, some old but all the socks had the distinction of being unmatched, alone.

Lois gritted her teeth and pulled out the worm's nest of socks. Yesterday, she had searched the house for single socks—under the dryer, under the laundry chute, even in the kid's drawers but it had been no use. Somehow, somewhere, one half of socks for four people disappeared into the bowels of the house, never to be seen again.

Perhaps she should ignore this load, let it sit there, all hot and fragrant. Perhaps the missing socks would magically appear when she returned back to the laundry room. But it was a cold and dreary day. She had no excuse. The laundry must be washed and folded or tomorrow, she would be a load behind and wouldn't be able to go to lunch with her friends.

It must have been her lucky day because five pairs of socks matched up automatically. The pesty socks seemed to be lying next to each other, for a change. The remaining single socks were lumpy and heavy, as if they weren't fully dry. Lois hesitated. Why should she be going through this torture every day when other women were out in the marketplace making thousands of dollars and doing *important* things?

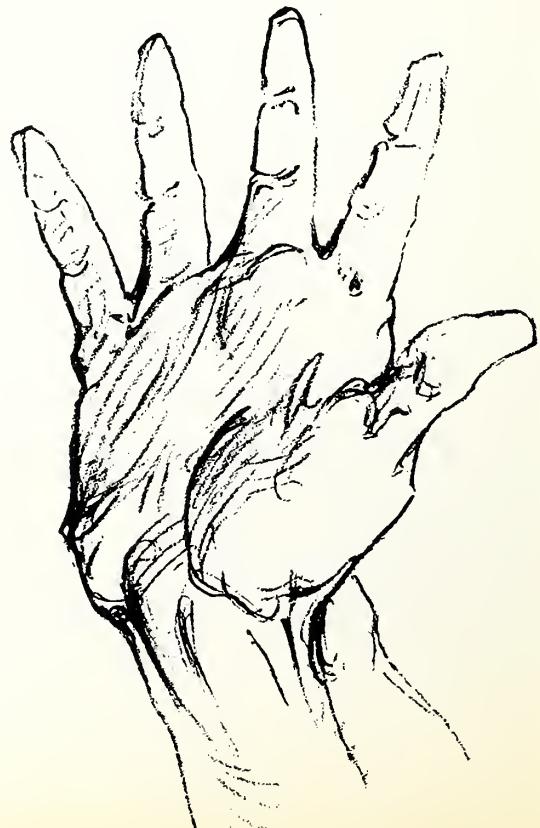
But Lois reminded herself of her responsibilities and dug into her chore—trying to match up fifteen pairs of socks that had no mate. Her pile of socks on top of the dryer never got smaller, only bigger with each load. Lois closed her eyes as she fingered the lump of socks. Omigod, Lois thought, Jeff left another piece of candy in his pockets and it has oozed all over the socks. Disgusting! Lois thought as she anticipated the gooey mess she would have to clean up. But it wasn't a jawbreaker. It was an ear...a human ear. That seemed strange to Lois because she may have lost many socks in the past, she couldn't recall anyone missing an ear. The dryer had caused the ear to dry up so it looked like a withered piece of cauliflower. Not at all repugnant...not like when Lois found a petrified frog in Jeff's jean pocket. That really was disgusting. Lois gingerly



placed the ear on top of the single sock pile and hoped it would go away while she finished folding the rest of the underwear. Actually, she didn't fold underwear, she just sort of laid them in piles. Her mother-in-law ironed underwear. Meanwhile, perhaps the ear would disappear and be gone when she came downstairs to do laundry tomorrow.

It was probably all a bad dream.

On Tuesday, the next day, Lois focused everywhere but at that poor ear. It was darkening now, resembling a piece of beef jerky. Lois had found lots of those in the kids' pockets. Funny thing tho'—after the jerky was washed, it plumped up like real meat.



Today's load was a snap, just shirts and colored stuff so maybe there wouldn't be the frustration of sorting unmatched socks. Lois was almost to the bottom of the grey cavern of the dryer. It was dark inside there because there was only a single bulb hanging from the basement utility room ceiling. Again, today, there was something lumpy in the bottom of dryer. This lump was too big to be wrapped inside a single sock. She reached deep inside. Lois closed her hand around something that seemed familiar. In fact, it seemed like someone was shaking her hand. Not having been out in public for awhile, she couldn't remember what shaking hands felt like. But the sensation persisted. She withdrew her arm but that clinging thing came out with her hand. In fact, it was a hand, neatly curled around her own. Lois didn't figure it was worth screaming about; why scream when no one could hear you? She had more serious thinking to do. She didn't even notice that there was only one single sock in the whole load. Why should a human hand and an ear be in her dryer? Her kids and her husband hurried in and out of her life, dawn and evening. They seemed perfectly normal. They were certainly not missing any body parts... or were they?

Lois placed the now black ear and the wrinkled hand in a plastic baggie and placed the bag on the floor of the freezer. At supper, she confronted her family.

"Well, kids, are any of you doing any science experiments these days?" Lois asked.

The kids stared at their mother and continued chewing their Hamburger Helper Casserole. Lois thought they shook their heads.

"Honey, have you been bringing home work from the office recently?" Her husband tore off a piece of home-baked bread and pondered it.

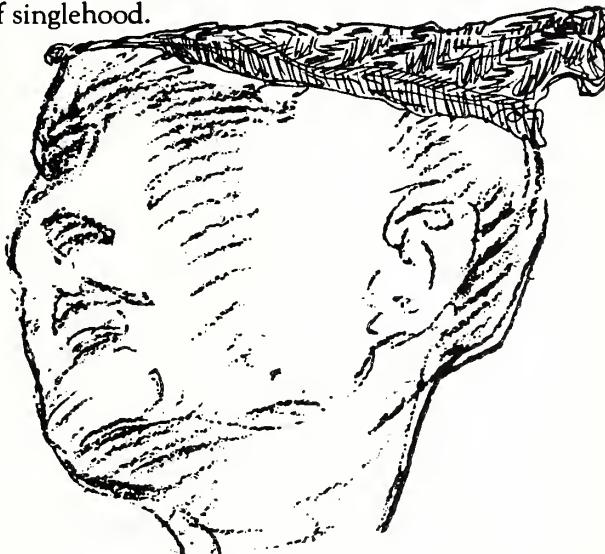
"What's the problem, Lois? Your time of the month?" He turned his gaze back to the kitchen under-the-counter TV. The newscaster said there had been a train wreck.

The next day, Lois almost decided not to do laundry. There couldn't possibly be a baggie of body parts in her freezer and she perhaps was suffering from hormonal changes she didn't even know about. But three active teenage boys and a messy husband required that she return to her basement laundry room. The latest load of wash was clunking and thumping down there in the dark. Lois pulled the light chain and geared up for the sock marathon. The sorting was uneventful and the last sock was lying inside, nestled on the shelf of the dryer. Lois grunted in triumph. It was an argyle sock she had been trying to match for weeks. But the sock felt strangely heavy. Lois

groaned. Why couldn't her life be hum-drum like everyone else's? She would never complain again.

When she pulled out the argyle sock, a very expensive sock, a gift from the in-laws, she suspected the inevitable. It bulged. The sock and whatever was inside smelled like the softener sheets Lois so carefully inserted with every load. The toe of the sock was the shape of a large grapefruit. Lois went through her mental laundry inventory of what that bulge could be—an apple, a yo-yo, maybe a can of tuna hijacked out of her cabinets?

Since this sock had been missing for so long, Lois thought maybe she should just throw it out, like she did with all the single socks after four months of singlehood.



But she pulled open the sock and peered inside. There was a head inside. It didn't look like anyone Lois knew. But then it was rather distorted. Lois had seen heads like that at the country fair—shrunken heads from the jungle. Perhaps an hour in Lois' sophisticated dryer would make any head look shrunken. She placed the sock with the head still inside the plastic baggie, now almost full with an ear and a hand. Lois, being a logical type of housewife, supposed she ought to check if the head was missing an ear but she didn't.

Instead, she pushed, with her foot, the pile of dirty clothes back into the corner, under the oil tank. She shut the basement door and walked upstairs to her bedroom. She took out a suitcase and pulled some basic and matched items from her drawers. She had the strangest sensations. She couldn't seem to hear and her left hand felt numb. Despite her handicaps, she locked her bulging suitcase and left the house. Walking down the quiet, tree-lined street, she rubbed her aching head. She was through sorting socks.

Marguerite Hanselman lives in Clarklake, Minnesota. She has published articles in the health field, short stories and has had two radio plays produced.

PAPER BREEZE

Peppermint papers dance
along a battered stone street
Traffic cross-catches the evening sun
Flash after flash of a day that's done-
Somewhere a child starts to run
Along this papery breeze
Holding a song in his throat
Note after bouncing note:
Little feet bare on the stone
Suddenly he knows he's alone
Watches the fire-glass flash
Twilight against the dark cars.
So we sit while the day gets done
It's something like victory
Finding peace
On the other side
Of a rushing street...

Maya Khosla

Shall we bring
Some of spring
Inside, today?
While pinched lips try
To whistle of swallows
And timeless feet wander
The slips of green...
Shall we fist these puffs of pink today
Smoking on every tree
Or lose ourselves in a soft
Stone city
Wandering bare feet?
Shall we sit watching windows
Play mirrors that never stay the same
Or just wait?

Maya Khosla

A BLUES PANTOUM

This blues comes through in the afternoon.
Ray Charles don't know about it.
It's for women,
tender women full of too much...
Ray Charles don't know about it.
Silk harmonicas wail in the snowless street.
Warm, grinning women full of too much
Giving.
Silk harmonicas wail in the snowless street,
And on the playground I watch endlessly
Giving.
Someone else's daycare child spins away.
And on the playground I watch infinite games.
This afternoon blues comes.
Someone's wounded daycare child spins into my arms.
Warm, grinning woman full of too much. Yearning.

Judy Katz-Levine

OTTER CREEK IN WINTER

Snow has brushed out all the fences,
the nearest wood is all I know,
the wood itself is strange, inhabited
by silences.

Cattails spring from white banks in tandem.
Crows pulse into the white sky,
and a rising wind lifts
a swallow flock of dead leaves
to skim and soar above the creekbed.

I walk down to the birch cluster
at the far clearing, where the thin light
of a winter sun gathers
to focus a pure radiance in the white bark.

I follow the puncture of a small deer's leap
a frozen mark of flight
riddling the snow, a weight of presence
in the small hollow.

Somewhere away, havened,
eyes leafy in the wavering light,
perhaps in the brush of a fallen birch,
the quick heart beats.

Ruth B. Thornton



HAIRCUT

I had my hair cut today, my ragged mane, weighing me down like a bundle of lies and gossip. I sat still like a good girl while Richard lifted the tangles from my neck and listened to my stories of broken hearts, his scissors clicking like commas and dashes, the blades kissing my neck as the brown ribbons fell loose through his fingers.

I left my surgeon standing in the rubble of my weaknesses. Cleansed of all those secrets I needed to lose, I walked away clean in my new cap, the skin of my neck cool in the breeze, my shoulders wearing the new strength of the sun.

Jennifer Whitney

CLOUDS

Trees rise like the ghosts of cathedral domes, and in the perfect sky one cloud moves, a camel crossing the desert alone.

After years of tests in gray and white and observations noted on cool surfaces of the mind—tablets bordered with silver and black—after decades of brown study, I realize I have no idea what holds a cloud together.

“Gravity. Or spinning inertial confinement,” one brain cell says.

“A dark rule of the imagination of God,” says another.

“The tenuous orbits of words you never hear,” say the clouds.

Jennifer Whitney

THE SCULPTOR

She was no longer young the year we met.
Her hair was grey and she wore grey pants and
a baggy sweater, but her eyes laughed and her
hands were never still. "You must fall in love
with the clay," she said, and she fell on it
with the strength of anger, pummeled it about,
then her violence turned to tenderness and she
stroked eyes into life on the dead lump. A
face was groping up out of the mud like
the first salamander forsaking the waters. "I've
been at it for thirty years," she said, "since my student
days abroad, and I sometimes think I'm beginning
to master the basics." The woman journalist asked
if she ever felt that she had missed fulfillment,
being unmarried and childless. And she laughed.

Gail White

THE SCHOLAR'S WIFE

It was a partnership at first:
he did research, she typed it.
She was great at footnotes,
perfect in bibliographies.
When he got his degree she sat
in the audience and smiled like a city
lit up at night.

In his book she had her sentence
in the introduction
about the invaluable assistance
of his wife.
She called it their joint work:
he got the credit.

He continues to do research,
reads, writes, gives papers:
her job now is admiration
since he can afford paid typists.
She lies in bed at night
and the footnotes scamper through her thoughts:
ibid, op cit, pace.
She would go to school again—
but everyone would be so young
and her powers of concentration
are not what they were.
Ibid, op cit, pace, vide:
the small feet trampled her
on their way to the sea.

Gail White

Gail White lives in New Orleans

Jennifer Whitney lives on a farm near Joelton, Tennessee.

Ruth Thornton is from Fresno, California.

Judy Katz Levine lives in Roslindale, Massachusetts.

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SEXUAL BIAS IN THE COURTROOM

Walter S. Feldman

Recent studies tend to establish the charge that sexual bias against women in the courts is rampant. A task force sponsored by the Judiciary in New York and New Jersey recently indicated that women who are involved in the legal system as lawyers, court personnel or litigants suffer a variety of affronts which range from personal humiliation to unequal status and inequitable verdicts. The two-year study by the judicial system of New York recently published indicates that many courts mishandle women and their problems. The survey revealed that male judges and court personnel often fail to understand rape and its implications, and today despite the widespread education and documentation frequently assign blame to the victim rather than to the criminal. In many cases involving divorce, child support and property settlements, judges repeatedly fail to recognize the wife's contribution to the marriage and this results in verdicts which are inequitable. The enforcement of child support awards is lax in many jurisdictions. Courtroom personnel, including other attorneys, judges and bailiffs, often display rude and callous behavior toward women, and many women, even attorneys as well as litigants, are frequently subjected to sexist and demeaning remarks and indeed are often not taken seriously by judges and other personnel in the courtroom. The road to employment and promotion for women especially those involved in the legal system, is often strewn with sexist obstacles.

Despite the Supreme Court rulings and other verdicts outlawing gender bias in the workplace, many women continue to describe sex as a barrier to important administrative appointments and to full participation in the practice of law. In many cases, they are thwarted in their efforts to achieve partnership status, to receive advancements, and fail to obtain opportunities to fully participate as professionals. Despite numerous and repeated efforts in this direction, women in key posts are far below the number which would appropriately reflect their expertise and value. Gender bias in the judicial system is widespread and this merely reflects bias in society as a whole.

The courts should provide an example and a solution, not a reflection of the problem. This problem must be faced and resolved. Sexual stereotyping is the major cause of the problem. It contaminates the entire court process and impairs the administration of justice. The result



is a systematic devaluation of women. Not only is it demeaning, demoralizing, and unjust, but inefficient and costly.

The need to confront gender bias is essential and urgent. Presently Wisconsin and Florida, as well as Massachusetts, are establishing formal programs to combat sex discrimination in the courts; these will result in imposed legal and regulatory procedures. A more enduring solution however will require information or knowledge. Only then can this problem appropriately be resolved.

Twenty states are presently studying this subject and this was the focus of a discussion at the joint annual meeting of the Conference of State Chief Justices and State Court Administrators in Omaha, Nebraska in August. Law schools are beginning to look at the problem and are presenting classroom discussions as well as the results of professional research in this area. The number of women law graduates and faculty members is steadily rising, and this too is a significant factor. Soon to be published in the *Journal of Legal Education* will be a study which details the bias and the portrayal of women by leading criminal justices and in textbooks used by most law students. Urgently needed at this time is a broadbased program to combat sexism in general, but specifically in the judicial system. This will require education, a blueprint for upgraded recruitment and promotion, and a method for monitoring and interceding in cases of established bias. This is not strictly a court issue or just a female gender issue, but one which reflects a problem of society as a whole.

Dr. Feldman, psychiatrist and attorney, lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. His article "Women's Liberation: Ten Years Later" appeared in this magazine in Summer 1983.

CREATIVITY WEEKEND AT FOREST BEACH

Five successful workshops highlighted the weekend of Samhain (All Hallows): photography, ceramics, writing, drawing and therapeutic massage. The Fall air was cool, the lake too cold for swimming, but the fires burned bright in the fireplace and on the beach. Participants unanimously proclaimed their delight in their explorations, sometimes breaking through obstacles and blocks to new and satisfying ground. Three participants have shared their experience here: Barbara Jenkins displays her photography done with workshop leader Peggy

Stevens, Sally Petrilli describes her experience in the writing workshop with leader Julie Siegel, and Suzanne Oliver gives us a report on what happened with her in the drawing workshop with Deborah Purdy.

The natural beauty of the setting, the talents and expertise of the women gathered together there, combined to evoke cries of "Let's do it again!"

Readers who want to join in a similar weekend in May 1988 should let us know as soon as possible, to help us plan.



Peggie Stevens, and Meryl Abensohn and I went out early the first day on a shoot.

Photography by Barbara Jenkins



Sunset on Lake Michigan—a quick shot before we ran back to learn to develop, print and enlarge prints.



I found some mushrooms, leaves and grasses below an oak tree.

The Forest Beach YWCA Creativity Weekend: A Personal View

Sally Petrilli

At the beginning of a painting session with a group of sixth grade children, Andre said, "Everything I paint is ugly." and refused to participate. A perceptive teacher challenged him by saying, "I'll bet you can't paint something REALLY ugly!". "Yes I can", he shot back. We were videotaping these children for a television course and we watched in fascination as Andre's pictures got better and better and his enthusiasm mounted. With a time-to-stop announcement he said with great excitement, "Give me more paper. I can do another one fast."

I thought of Andre at the moment that I realized there was only a short time left to finish what I was working on for Julie Siegel's creative writing workshop. I too had been challenged and I needed more time. I had begun the weekend with the feeling that "I can't really do this." As a writer of study guides, scripts, content outlines, business letters and memos, I was feeling very out-of-context and somewhat vulnerable. Also barren. The hours of empty pages did not seem to discourage Julie. She played music, read poetry, took us for long walks through the Fall woods and along the deserted beach. Finally, from a stack of post cards we chose images of women from which we were to describe connections. I chose a picture of two Belgian women walking along a wharf and another of two Moroccan women and laboriously, after ten pages of rewrites, produced a poem.



SERVANTS

Amy and I on an afternoon off—
the housework finished, the silver polished—
free, in this sun-filled time
to walk together down to the wharf.
In a small cafe we talk and sip bitter coffee.
Wandering in and out of the quiet, dimly
lit shops,
our laughter fills the tangy sea air.

The swarthy young men on the Moroccan ship
newly arrived from across the sea
pause and glance at us. We linger there
watching them haul in the heavy lines
and we talk of the women in that distant land.
The veiled Moroccan women, moving silently
through the hot, dusty streets wild with color—
enveloped in their heavy robes.

As the sky begins to darken, we draw away
buttoning our brown cloth coats against
the chill.
And turning reluctantly toward our evening
chores
we too are silent.

When I realized that what seemed extremely unlikely could actually happen, I was ready to write. The weekend was winding down and we were all meeting to share our experiences as I hurried to complete the last assignment. Photographers were developing last minute prints, the drawing class had filled the walls of the lodge with their work, the massagers were resting their fingers and the writers were going to read. In some degree I suspect that we all met a few challenges that weekend. Like Andre, perhaps we grew a little too.



A Breakthrough

Suzanne Oliver

First of all, I thought, I don't like groups of women. I didn't want to go to the creativity weekend. I mumbled and grumbled to myself as I packed the car and drove off to pick up a friend who was going to ride with me. I kept thinking why am I doing this? Why can't I learn to say no? Why? Why? Why?

As we drove through the night I felt a little less reluctant and a small sense of adventure started to set in. However I would still have chosen not to do, what I was about to do.

My first response as we arrived at the setting was still unsettling, disjointed and the opening introductions felt awkward to me. But the food was good and slowly as the evening unwound I began to feel that it was quite okay to be there and that perhaps I would even have a good time.

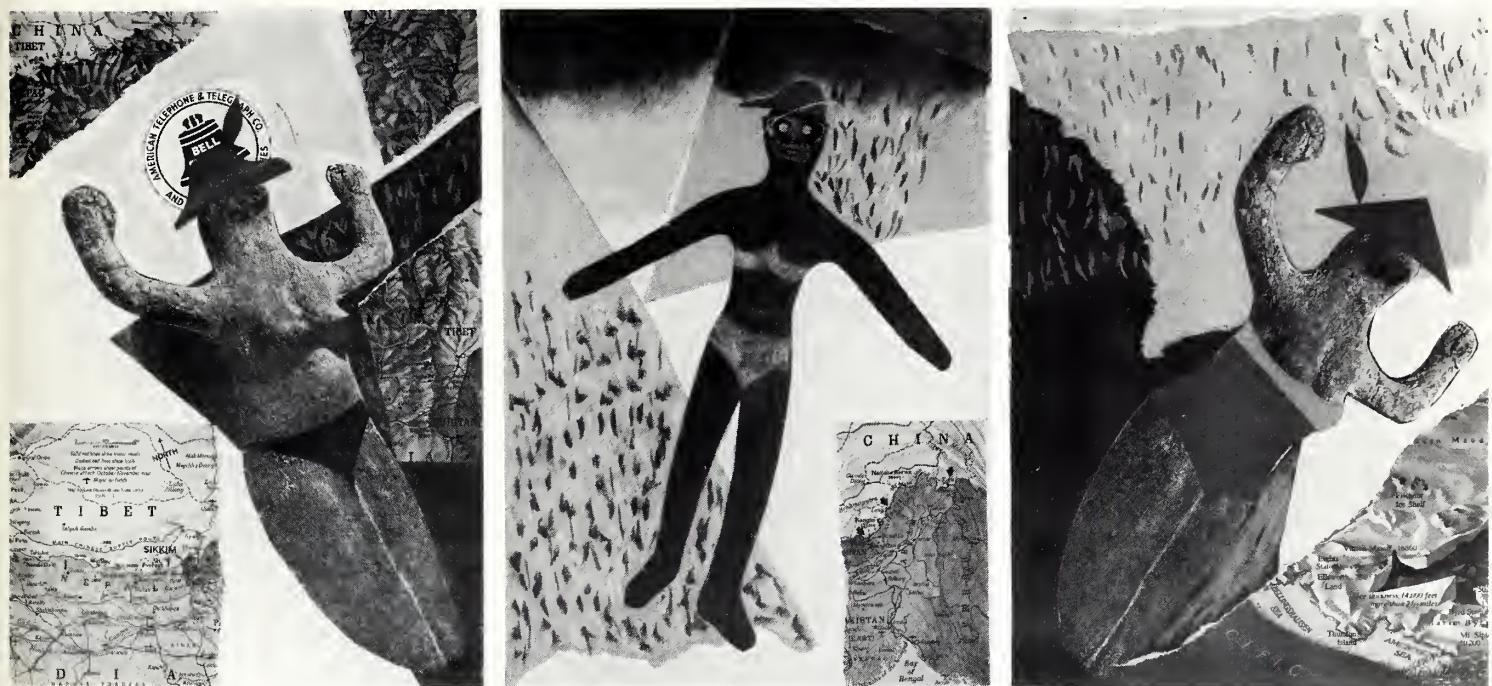
By Saturday morning I realized what my problem had been. I had forgotten something very important. And that is that *women are wonderful*. And when you put a group of them together in search of creativity, you've got the potential for magic. And that's what I found at our creativity retreat. I found magic.

There was magic in the fact that within a few hours on Saturday morning I felt bonded to the women in my group. We had laughed and cried. We had shared some secrets not told to anyone in a while, maybe never. We were vulnerable to each other. We were open. We were each looking for something and through our drawings and our discussions, we opened more doors and peeked inside. We spent lots of intensive time together, first creating artwork and then thoughtfully examining what we had created. Our leader gave us various exercises to fulfill and we either did what she said or we rebelled and did something else. It really didn't matter. Whatever we did was

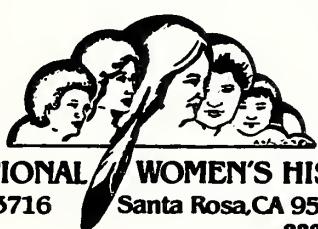
revealing. We came together. We went away from each other and then we came back together again. We were like waves on the shore, ebbing and flowing. We spent time together. We spent time alone. Every time we came back together and put our pictures on the wall I was filled with wonder. We made such beautiful things and we had so much fun doing it. I began to walk around as if I were bewitched. It was hard to believe I could come so far. From not wanting to

come at all to feeling how incredibly fortunate I was to have had this experience. The beautiful surroundings, the trees, the water, the sand, the rocks, the wonderful food, the companionship and the great challenge of opening up your creative self and just letting it flow was something I'll never forget.

I grew at least an inch.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT
Box 3716 Santa Rosa, CA 95402 (707) 526-5974
2321 Coddington Center
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

PUBLIC LAW 100-9

Designating the month of March as "Women's History Month"

Whereas American women of every race, class, and ethnic background helped found the Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways as servants, slaves, nurses, nuns, homemakers, industrial workers, teachers, reformers, soldiers and pioneers, and

Whereas American women have played and continue to play a critical economic, cultural and social role in every sphere of our Nation's life by constituting a significant portion of the labor force working in and outside of the home; and

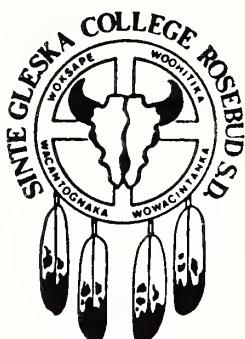
Whereas American women have played a unique role throughout our history by providing the majority of the Nation's volunteer labor force and have been particularly important in the establishment of early charitable, philanthropic and cultural institutions in the country; and

Whereas American women of every race, class and ethnic background served as early leaders in the forefront of every major progressive social change movement, not only to secure their own right of suffrage and equal opportunity, but also in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor union movement and the modern civil rights movement; and

Whereas despite these contributions, the role of American women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued in the body of American history;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the month of March is designated as "Women's History Month," and the President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

For more information contact: National Women's History Project,
P.O. Box 3716 Santa Rosa, CA 95402 (707) 526-5974



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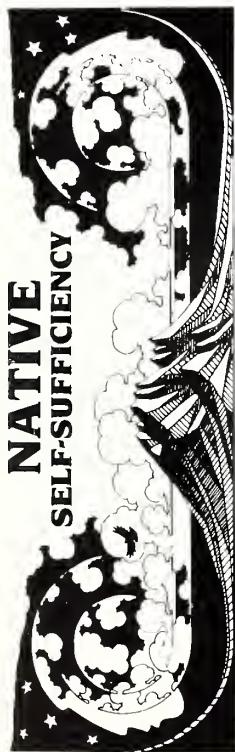
Dear Dr. Hughes:

On behalf of Sinte Gleska College I would like to thank you for your recent gift to our library. A copy of your latest issue devoted to the Native American Woman is especially significant for us here on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation.

At Sinte Gleska College we are educating the young men and women who will change things here. Your gift demonstrates your commitment to our mission, and we are grateful for the support.

Sincerely,

Ann Szabo,
Library Director



Dear Ms. Hughes,

I just finished reading the American Indian Women issue of the Creative Woman. Congratulations on a beautiful piece of work! I especially enjoyed the overview by Clara Sue Kidwell identifying the power of Indian women to effect change and the strong statements on the complementarity of men and women in traditional societies.

In our work we've found that Indian women are working all across Indian Country for positive social change within a framework that values culture, family and community. It's exciting to see the diversity of skills and the vision that fuels the many different projects women are leading.

Sincerely,

Victoria Bomberry, Editor-in-Chief

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You
are Amazing
Grace. You are a
Precious Jewel,
you-Special, Miraculous,
unrepeatable, fragile,
fearful, tender, lost,
Sparkling Ruby
Emerald jewel,
rainbow splendor
person.
jean Baug

A service of
Thanksgiving for
Mary Kathryn Witt

Sunday, August 23, 1987

SHARING GRIEF

Elmer Witt, former chaplain at Governors State University, recently shared with us the tragic loss of his daughter, Mary Kathryn, age 27, in an auto accident. Mary was an unusual young woman who accomplished more in her young life than many who live far longer: she worked as a volunteer with an alternative custody criminal justice program, as a street people counselor, and at Holden Village with her dad. Her years were life-giving and life-enriching. The Center for Global Education at Augsburg College in Minneapolis has named its scholarship fund for low income people in Mary's honor. Who among us has not known the grief and pain of loss? In remembering, we create a memorial by finding ways to continue the meanings and values that a life expressed. We send our condolences to the Witt family.

Changes and Plans

Harmonic convergence has come and gone. The cynics scoffed. (But why is it that these same pundits never ridicule the World Day of Prayer, a similar international day of shared intention toward peace and harmony? Guess it must depend on whether such good intentions coalesce inside or outside the established institutions.) Whatever the causative forces at work, some decent things have happened: Arias won the Nobel Peace Prize for his plan for Central America, the super-powers negotiated arms reduction, and Wall Street and the over-inflated US dollar both endured needed corrections. If the philosophy of the *I Ching* is correct, and all phenomena, from the cosmic to the microscopic, are related in a given instant of time, we should look for signs of harmonic convergence in our own lives.

The progress of *The Creative Woman* continues with University sponsorship ensured for the next five years. Your editor, freed from professorial obligations, can now devote more time to the care and feeding of the magazine. We have begun a promotional effort to place TCW in feminist bookstores in this country and abroad, an initiative that has already put us in twenty bookstores in the United States and Canada, with nibbles of interest from as far away as London. We look forward to the formation of a new task force on fund-raising to support our growth and outreach. The Advisory Council recently responded to a lengthy questionnaire with massive advice and innovative suggestions. We need the ideas of our readers, too. Can you help to extend the circulation by tapping into your networks? How do you want to see us develop in the next five years? What topics would interest you?

Linda Grace-Kobas has suggested the formation of discussion groups in various cities with a focus around the magazine. We'll publish a directory of contact people (from Maine to California, and in Canada, too). If you are willing to be listed in such a directory, write to us. What can you expect? At the very least, a few telephone calls from women who are interested in talking to a like-minded soul. Our readers are scattered far and wide. And, who knows? it might be the beginning of a new support group, action group, or book review group. When you start networking, you can never know where it may lead.



Future Issues

Spring-Summer 1988: WOMEN OF ISRAEL:
JEWISH AND PALESTINIAN/ARAB

Guest Editor Barbara Jenkins

Fall 1988: WOMEN IN PHOTOGRAPHY,
Guest Editor Pat Gardner

Winter 1989: WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT,
Guest Editor Marilyn Fischbach

Also in the Planning Stage: Diaries and Journals, The Gaia Hypothesis, Women Flying, Women in Education, and Empowering Women of Color,
Guest Editor Loretta Ross.

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Readers may borrow the following additions to our tape collection, all from Holden Village, a religious retreat and conference center in Chelan, Washington.

WOMEN AND POWER: Sources of Power,
Stephanie Riger

FORUM AT HOLDEN VILLAGE—GOD OUR MOTHER; Thinking About Inclusive Language

WORSHIP AND GENDER: Covenant Communities, Exploring our Liturgical Needs,
Rosemary Ruether

GOD-LANGUAGE, GENDER AND PRAYER,
Rosemary Ruether

ISLAM: The Prophet, John Taylor

HEH

Our apologies to Paula Gunn Allen for the misprinting of her poem in the last issue. Here it is as it should be.

C'Koy'u, Old Woman

old woman there in the earth
outside you we wait
do you dream of birth, bring
what is outside inside?

old
woman inside
old
woman outside

old woman there in the sky
we are waiting inside you
dreaming your dream of birthing
get what is inside/outside

a hey a hey a hey a ho
a hey a hey a hey a ho
a hi oh ho a hi oh ho
a hey a hey a hey a ho

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